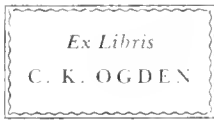




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Cambridgeshire Cameos.

I.—Thomas Hobson.



Thomas Hobson was a nationally famous citizen of Cambridge who lived in the reign of James 1st. His occupation was that of a carrier to and from London. He is said to have been the originator of livery stables, and that he made it a rule that the horses should all be let in turn, the customer to take that which stood nearest the stable-door. "That or none" was the ultimatum to every objector, and this soon passed current as a proverb by the name of "Hobson's Choice." Hobson died on January 1st, 1630, aged 86, and was buried in the chancel of Bene't Church.

Urbs Camberitum.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

II.—Elizabeth Woodcock.



Elizabeth Woodcock, of Impington, acquired her celebrity from a misadventure which in some of its circumstances was remarkable enough to be entered on the page of local history. When on her way home from Cambridge, on Saturday, Feb. 2, 1799, she was overwhelmed in the snow, and literally buried alive until the ninth day afterwards. She was discovered and rescued on Feb. 10, and survived until the middle of July; in the meantime she was interviewed by thousands of visitors from far and near. Her last resting-place in the church-yard at Impington is not marked by a grave-stone, but on the place where she was buried alive a monument was erected fifty years after the event.

Urbs Camberitum.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE GEMMEOS

III.—Jemmy Gordon.



Jemmy Gordon was a Cambridge lawyer, who was more noted for his ready wit and repartee, than for his forensic skill. Being crossed in love he took to drink, and eventually became an inveterate toper. He was often presented at Court—that is the Borough Police Court—so often, indeed, that the magistrates were tired of committing him to prison. Upon one occasion they dismissed him on condition that he left the town. He promised to do so, and he kept his word. He took a walk to Madingley but he returned the same night, taking care to "report himself" at the wayside inn—"The Man loaded with Mischief"—both in going and returning. He was soon before the Bench again, and the Mayor with well-feigned sternness said—"Gordon! did I not order you to leave the town?" "Yes, your worship," said Gordon demurely, "and so I did, but here I am again." This eccentric man finished his disreputable career in St. Edward's parish workhouse, where he died Sept. 16th, 1825, aged 63.

Urbs Camboritum.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

IV. Squire Butler of Barnwell Abbey.



THE portrait of this local worthy is so expressive that there is no need to detail his characteristics—he was an opinionated egotist, and was renowned for his eccentricity. A patent evidence of his inveterate singularity is the way in which he planned his funeral obsequies. He had a huge packing case made to serve for his coffin; it was large enough to hold several people. This he used to shew to his visitors, and drinking parties were entertained in it, akin to the house-warming customs of the time. In his will he stipulated that one the beneficiaries whom he named, should drive his funeral car—a waggon drawn by two of his farm-horses; and further, that if an objection was made at the church, his corpse should be carried back to the Abbey, and buried in the garden. His executors, however, had his remains placed in an ordinary coffin, and conveyed in the undertaker's hearse—the great oak chest being driven on before it, in the manner stipulated—the chest was first placed in the vault, and then the coffin was lowered into it. Thus was buried on May 31, 1765, “the Old Briton,” as he used to style himself. His autobiographical record is worth reading, it is inscribed on six large slabs of slate, which were once enshrined in the Abbey Church, but are now affixed to the west wall of the churchyard, where they may be “read by all.”

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

V.—The Parish Stocks at Meldreth.

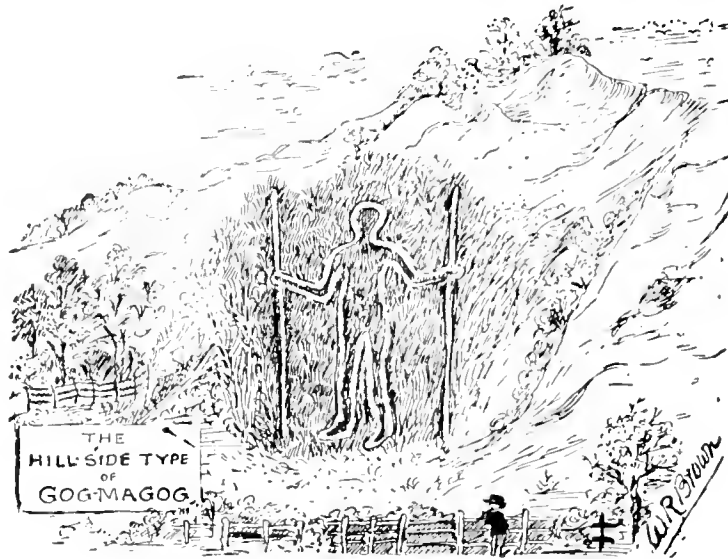


THE old village Stocks here depicted are the only example of the kind now in evidence in this part of Cambridgeshire. They are conspicuously situated on a mound where three roads meet, leading respectively to Kneesworth, Melbourn and Meldreth. They are sheltered by the outspreading branches of a large chestnut tree, whose genial shade has been welcomed by many who have sat on that stool of penitence. The irons on the upright post are manacles for the hands of those who were sentenced to be whipped—a not uncommon penalty from fifty to a hundred years ago. Thus to be “invested in the stocks” was not so trivial a punishment as some may think. An amusing story is told of Lord Chief Justice Camden. A case once came on before his lordship, in which a person sued a magistrate for false imprisonment in the stocks. The counsel for the defendant tried to browbeat the plaintiff, and to treat the punishment of a seat in the stocks as a trivial affair. The judge leaned over the Bench and in an audible whisper asked the barrister if he had ever been in the stocks. “No, my lord!” was the reply of the surprised counsel. “Well, I have,” said the judge, “and I can tell you its no trifling matter.” This remarkable experience of the judge is thus accounted for. Years before this when he was a barrister on circuit, he visited Lord Dacre at Aleby, in Essex. On going out for a walk with another legal friend one morning, he espied the village stocks, and had a fancy to try for himself what the homely but common mode of punishment was like. After his friend had fixed him in and chatted awhile, he absent-mindedly walked away, and forgot the amateur prisoner. Mr. Camden appealed to the passers by to release him, for as he said “he was there for a joke.” But such an argument proved useless, and he had to sit there until quite late in the day. As the party were assembling for dinner, he was missed, and his companion of the morning walk, all at once recollected where, and under what circumstances he had parted company with Mr. Camden.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

VI.—The Gog-Magog Hills, Stapleford.



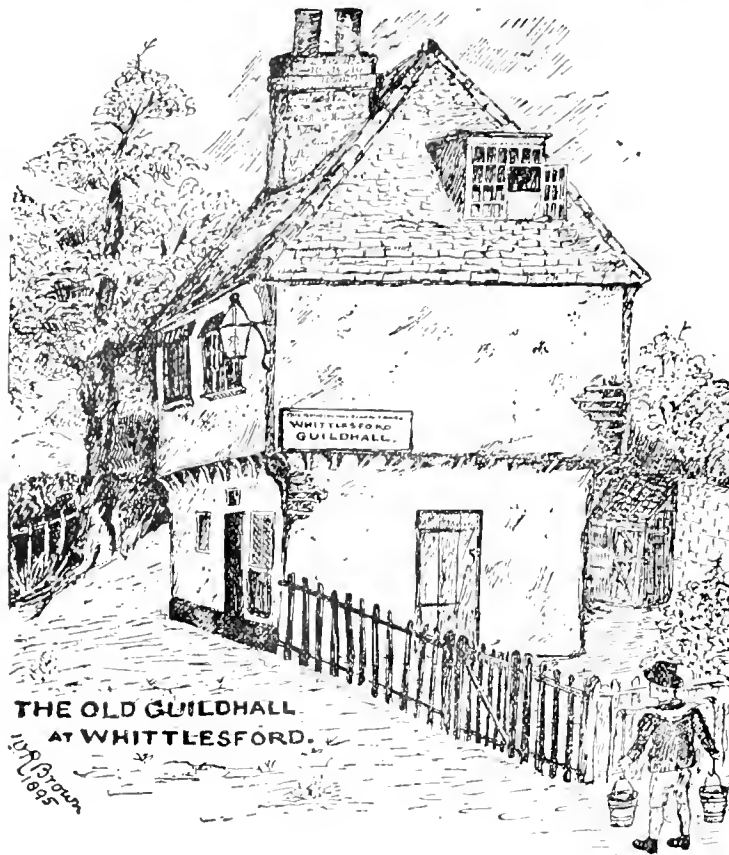
GOG-MAGOG is a somewhat remarkable term to have a place among the local names of Cambridgeshire, and its occurrence there has naturally puzzled many. It is the quaint appellation of a range of hills which flanks Cambridge on the south. They were thus designated from a gigantic figure of a man cut in the hill-side near the old British entrenchments of Vandlebury. The grassy turf was cut away so as to expose the chalky soil, and the figure thus formed would be visible for many miles, looking like the erect form of an immense giant. This effigy was known as Gog-Magog. A similar figure was once in evidence on Plymouth Hoe, fronting the sea as a conspicuous landmark, but this, like our Cambridgeshire example, has long since disappeared, leaving no memorial beyond its historic record. On Giant's Hill, at Cerne Abbas, in Dorsetshire, there is, however, one of these colossal effigies still to be seen, the height of which is 180 feet. High up on the South Downs behind Eastbourne there is a very much taller example, which we here depict; it measures from head to foot 240 feet, and being outlined with white bricks, its well-defined figure may be seen for many miles away, a permanent illustration of the hill-side type of GOG-MAGOG.

According to an old monkish legend the Camp of Vandlebury was once haunted by the apparition of a warrior, which at midnight came forth and challenged all comers. Osbert, a Norman Knight, who was quartered at Cambridge Castle, having heard the story, manfully resolved to go and seek an encounter with this ghostly champion. He therefore repaired to the camp, and leaving his squire within hailing distance, he announced his presence, uttering aloud his defiance. The eerie warrior promptly responded; he was armed cap-a-pie, and mounted on a jet-black steed. They fought gallantly, and the Norman unhorsed his ghostly antagonist. By the aid of his squire, who now came upon the scene, the horse was secured and led off at a gallop to Cambridge Castle, where it was tethered in the court-yard under the charge of the squire. At cock-crow next morning the demon steed reared, it is said, and breaking free, vanished away. Upon each recurring *year-mind* or anniversary of that adventure, the Norman Knight was reminded of the occasion by a spasmodic spell of pain, caused by the gaping afresh of the wounds received on that eventful night.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

VII.—Mems from the Record of Whittlesford.

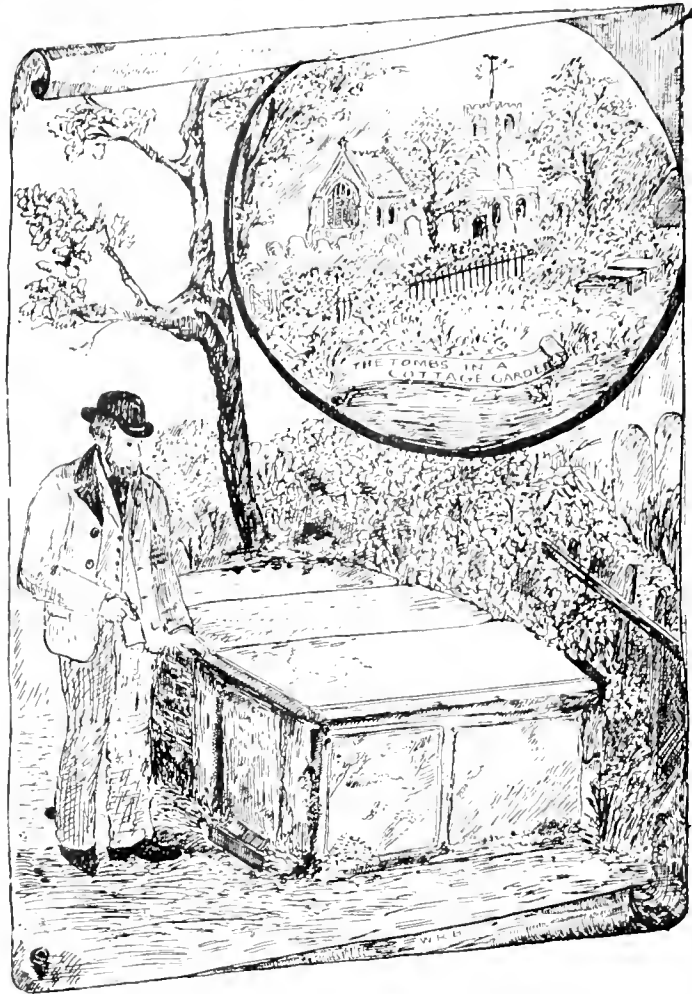


WHITTLESFORD, near Sawston, is an old Anglo-Saxon village. Its name betokens that it was a settlement of the *Wortlingas*, the same clan that gave name to Whittlesea in the Isle of Ely. It has a line or two in history to back its claim of antiquity. Many of our towns are so old that their birthday is not known, so to speak, and they have nothing to show for the remote dates to which their origin has been assigned. To be named in the pages of *The Doomsday* is a venerable record, but Whittlesford has among its credentials the record of an Alderman's Court, almost a century earlier than the time of the Doomsday Survey. An Alderman's Court then-a-days was something similar to what our Assizes are to-day, similar in its functions, and similar in its powers. A more recent but still an old-fashioned voucher for the by-past importance of Whittlesford, is the quaint but picturesque old building which forms the subject of our illustration. It is still standing at Church Lane Corner, abutting on the London Road. As notified on a board, this place was in olden time known as "The Whittlesford Guildhall." There are but few of these old Guildhalls now in evidence. We need not describe the place, our picture speaks for itself. It is an old half-timbered structure, its time-defying frame-work is of oak, the stability of which is attested by the fact that many old English houses so framed have out-lived brick and stone in scores of instances. These "Guildhalls" were not "Courts of Justice," the 'guild' or rather 'gyld' was an association of men for purposes of mutual aid, a *self-help* Society, a "Trade Union" in one of its most venerable forms. In this neighbourhood were three *tumuli*, or 'grave mounds,' called "The Chronicle Hills," more anciently probably the *Conical Hills*—hills like those at Bartlow, Stevenage, and in many other localities. They were undoubtedly of British origin, many curious remains and relics have been unearthed from these tumuli. It was the custom of this aboriginal people to raise huge earth-mounds over the slain on their battle-fields, and thus *earth-fasten* the dead. Numerous skeletons have been discovered there with war-like implements, swords, spear-heads, etc. There is an amusing story told in the village about one of these skeletons. It was one of two which were discovered in a most remarkable position, showing that they were combatants: one was gripping the other so tightly that even in the grave they were not separated. This particular skeleton was in a sitting posture: one of the venturesome labourers took a fancy to the skull of this warrior, and accordingly dismembered it from the skeleton and carried it home to his cottage. At night, however, up came the headless skeleton to the labourer's house. Knocking at the door, it demanded the restitution of the skull. This occurred night after night, so the gossips say, until the skull was taken back and re-placed. Similar weird and eerie stories are told in Norfolk, where the Boleyn family are the headless travellers, but we should have to resort to the folklore of other countries to match this story of the Whittlesford skeleton on tramp for its skull. It remains but to say that in this account of Whittlesford, we have only sampled its items of interest.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

VIII.—The “Holcroft” Burial-plot at Oakington.

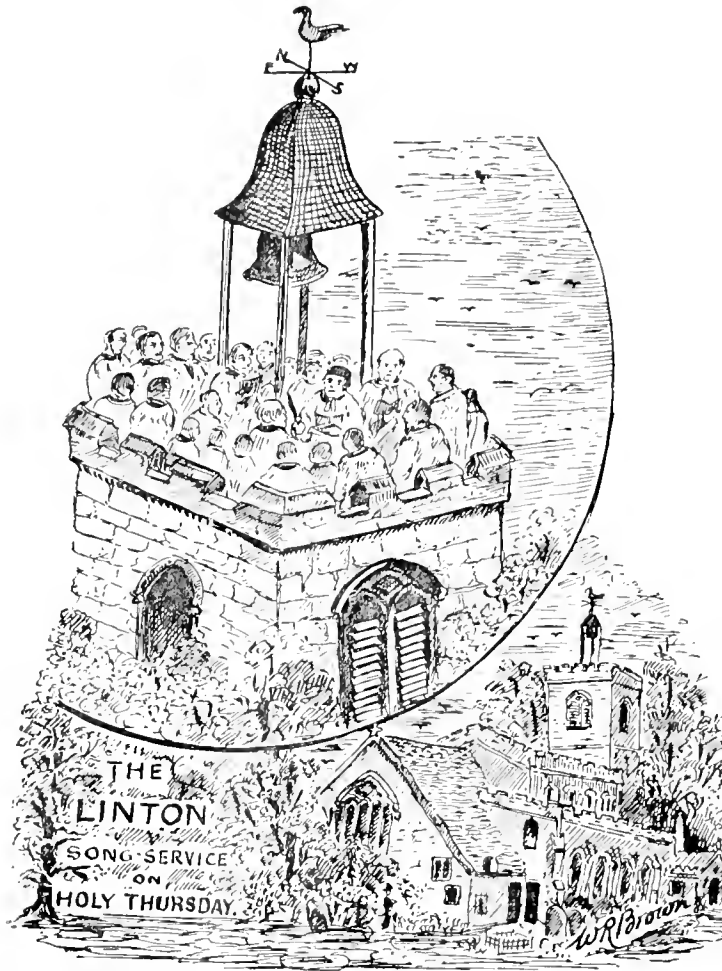


JUST outside the churchyard at Oakington is a cottage-garden with three tombs therein, as shown in our illustration. These tombs mark the graves of FRANCIS HOLCROFT and two other pioneers of local Nonconformity—JOSEPH ODDEY and HENRY OSLAND. This plot of ground was purchased by Holcroft as a burial-place for himself and those who took part in the great religious movement in 1662. This fact entirely traverses the popular notion that these distinguished Nonconformists were buried there, because they were refused burial in the adjoining churchyard. The lot of these worthies was cast in troublous times—the darksome days of the Stuart Restoration—a time when the Anglican Church had sunk to the very zero of demoralization. Both Holcroft and Oddey were ejected by the Act of Uniformity—Holcroft from the living of Bassingbourn and Oddey from that of Meldreth. Thereupon they devoted themselves to the hazardous task of ministering to those who adhered to Puritanical principles—the Dissenters of that day. Their spell of “loving work and faithful labour” was soon cut short by imprisonment, for in the very next year Francis Holcroft was indicted at the Cambridge Assizes in pursuance of the statute 35 Eliz., c. 1, and for nine years he was imprisoned in Cambridge Castle. The gaoler however occasionally allowed him out on parole, when he invariably visited the various missions of his adherents. The Royal Indulgence of 1672 set Mr. Holcroft free; his release was due to the “pardon” granted primarily to the persecuted Quakers, the addition of his name and others being expressly permitted by Royal mandate. The following is a list of the churches established by Holcroft and his coadjutors:—Meldreth, 1680; Wenden Ambo, 1683; Chishill, 1688; Barrington, 1689; Cambridge (Hog Hill), 1691; Clavering, 1692; Guyhirn, 1693 (removed to Isleham 1694; Great Eversden and Cottenham, 1694; Croydon-cum-Clopton, 1695 (removed to Great Gransden 1732).

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

IX.—The Ascension Day Custom at Linton.



A CHORAL SERVICE on the summit of a church-tower is the realistic way of commemorating the Ascension, which is an annual custom at Linton. This open-air service of song now takes place in the afternoon of Holy Thursday, but when first instituted, it was celebrated at night with the additional attractions of fairy lights and Chinese-lanterns. In 1893 its observance was of a very picturesque character. High above the heads of the choir on their lofty orchestra towered a gigantic cross outlined with variegated lamps, which might be seen miles away. It served to remind those versed in Church history, of the glittering cross in the sky which Constantine claimed to have seen when he heard a voice from heaven, saying—"IN HOC SIGNO VINCES" (Conquer by this sign). This song-service is in no way related to the May-day *matinée* which takes place on the top of Magdalen tower at Oxford and on the Bar-gate at Southampton, which are said to be survivals of sun-worship, a form of idolatry which is of pre-historic origin, and which once had a firm foothold in this country. There is nothing in the history of these early morning concerts which bespeaks such a venerable relationship. The Oxford observance represents in a transfigured form what in pre-Reformation times was an "obituary service"—a requiem-mass for the soul of King Henry VII., no traces, however, of such a double-distilled Pagan practice are to be found in its present day celebration.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

X.—Eversden Manor and the Gospel Oak.



FROM the traditions of Eversden, and its neighbourhood, we glean the following particulars. It was in the wood at the back of Eversden Manor that Francis Holcroft when out on *parole* from Cambridge Castle, used secretly to preach to those who sided with him in the great Noncon-

formist movement at the latter end of the seventeenth century. These services were held under a certain tree conventionally termed "the Gospel Oak"; it stood near the glade now called "the straight Ride"; this memorable tree is not now in evidence, but it was well-known to some elderly friends of the writer. At this sequestered "meeting place" the venerable "prisoner of the Lord" used to meet his friends for religious converse, and there they renewed the covenant from time to time. Holcroft was much attached to the Eversden people, he bequeathed a small estate at Soham for the joint benefit of the Eversden congregation and that at Barrington. Over the pulpit in Eversden Chapel, of which he was the founder, is a tablet, the inscription on which may be quoted *in extenso*:—In memory of the Rev. Francis Holcroft, M.A., sometime Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge. He began his earnest ministry while yet at College; in principle a Congregationalist, the Act of Uniformity in 1662 made him a Dissenter. For preaching in this village in 1663 he was imprisoned nearly nine years in Cambridge Castle; a second bondage of three years soon followed. Again free, he pursued his great work until his health failed. He died at Triplow, January 6, 1692, and was buried at Oakington. England and the world will never lose the benefit of the struggle for Civil and Religious Rights in the 17th century. "Other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours." This Memorial Stone is set up to their great and good founder by the Church and Congregation in this place in 1862.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XI.—A Quaint Rogation-tide Custom.



THE curious scene here depicted was witnessed by the writer on Rogation Tuesday (May 21st), 1895; it is an integral part of the observance known as "ganging" or beating the parish bounds; this was at Houghton near St. Ives in Huntingdonshire. The illustration is given here as a present-day observance of a custom which was once in vogue in Cambridgeshire. From the fly-leaf of Bottisham Parish Register Mr. Edw. Hailstone quotes the following entries, dated May 7 and 8, 1719;

"We went to the parting of Westley, Wilbraham, and Bottisham Heaths, there made a cross,* *Green Eagle put therein*; then sung 1st and 2nd commandments... at the parting of Borough Green Heath and ours we made a cross, *John Winch put therein*; and so towards east of Borough Green Heath and Little Swaffham and ours, and there made a cross and sung one stave of the 8th Psalm, &c.; at the Lower end of Little Swaffham Follis Furlong parting of our field and meres, made a cross, *Abraham Cutcher put therein*."

Houghton parish being bordered on one side by the Ouse some of the "Rogationing" party have to traverse the bounds in a boat, and one at least of the party, generally a *new member* of the Rogation Guild, is treated to a dip in the river. On one of these occasions twice the boat was upset, *accidentally* of course, and all the crew had to beat the bounds with their *hands* as well as their *feet* to keep afloat until the punt was righted. Thus from time immemorial the remembrance of the water-boundary—the scientific frontier—has been "washed in." The land-ganging part of the business is equally curious. Holes in the ground are dug at intervals (as seen by the writer), and some of the party are put in head downwards, while some formula is droned out, and the hero of the occasion is dubbed with a gentle tap of the shovel. This department of the service has its "wetting" too, as the commemorators generally finish up the day's doings at the ale-house.

In some country places the rustics believe there is magic in this business, and that the crops show up better for this periodical farce, fondly fancying that the goddess of nature rewards the observance of the custom.

In some districts the Gospel Oak is still in evidence, reminding one of another feature of these old ganging days; there it was that the Gospel was read on such occasions. "The Crouch Oak" is another reminiscence: a notable tree on or near the boundary was marked with a cross, cut deep in the bark; the term means marked with the sign of the cross. See the tree in the illustration. It is worthy of note that before these boundary holes are filled in each of the party throws in a stone as evidence for the next triennial visitation.

URES CAMBORITUM.

* A shallow cross-shaped trench—X—about a foot in depth.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XII. Thomas Clarkson, of Wisbech.



ON the bed-roll of Cambridgeshire worthies who have attained a National fame, there is no more conspicuous name than that of THOMAS CLARKSON of Wisbech. His father, the Rev. John Clarkson, was the Head-Master of the Grammar School of that town. Thomas Clarkson was educated with a view to his becoming a clergyman. After a thorough grounding in a Grammar School curriculum he was sent to St. Paul's School at the age of 15. There are several "exhibitions" to the Universities connected with this institution; by the aid of one of these educational bounties he was enabled to enter St. John's College, Cambridge, as a sizar. In due course, he graduated as B.A., this was in 1783; his position on the Honour List was at the head of the Junior Optimes. In 1784 he won the Members' Prize for a Latin Essay, and in the following year he was again successful in the same direction. It was the 1785 Essay that was

THE EDUCATIONAL VOUCHER OF HIS FAME.

This Essay was entitled *Anne liceat invito in servitutem dare*, in other words, "Is it legitimate to enslave men against their will? This essay he read at the B.A. Commencement of 1785, in the Senate House. The "getting up" of this essay brought him face to face with such thrilling facts and tragic incidents of slave-life that he felt it to be his duty to devote himself to the emancipation of the negro, and the entire abolition of the slave-trade. This noble resolution was made on his way from Cambridge to London, as he was riding homeward. The precise spot on the road which he had reached when he made this resolve is marked by a monument which bears this inscription—"On the spot where stands this Monument, in the month of June, 1785, THOMAS CLARKSON resolved to devote his life to bringing about the Abolition of the Slave-Trade."—This monument is an obelisk of Portland stone—the base, upon which the above inscription is carved is of Yorkshire stone. It was placed there by A. G. Puller, Esq., of Youngsbury House, a mansion near by. The place is about two miles north of Ware. There is another monument to Clarkson in his native town, Wisbech; but the grandest monument of all, is the Emancipation of the Slave, and the suppression of the traffic.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XIII.—The Penances performed at Ditton Church.



On Sunday, the 6th of May, 1849, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Ditton Church was the scene of riotous proceedings, and an indescribable uproar, a rowdy protest against the penance of Edward Smith, the Church Clerk, who was also the tap-room fiddler at Ditton Plough, and gardener at the Rectory. There is a record of another of these dramatic sentences in this church, the details of which may be the more interesting if given in the quaint phraseology and old-fashioned spelling of the original account:—

Sexta die mensis Januarii, anno 1593. Parte of penance enjoyned unto Agnes Black of Fen Ditton. The saied penitent shall uppon Sunday, beinge the eighte daie of February next cominge, clothed in a white sheete downe to the grounde, and havinge a white wand in her hand, resort unto the parish church porch of Fen Ditton aforesaid, and there shall stande from the seconde peele to morninge prayers untill the readinge of the seconde lesson, desiringe the people that passe into the church to praie to God for her and to forgive her: at which time the minister shall come to this penitent and fetehe her into the church, reading the psalm of *Miserere* in Englishe and place her in the middle alley apart from all other people where she shall penitently kneel until the readinge of the commandments, at which time the minister there shall come to this penitent and cause her to saie and confesse as followethe, viz.,

“Good people, I acknowledge and confesse that I have offended Almighty God, and by my evill example, you all, for that I have broken His divine laws and commandments in committing the most shameful and abominable sinne of adulterie or fornicacion for which I am most hartily sorry, and I ask both God and you most hartily forgiveness for the same, promisinge by Gode’s helpe never to offend hereafter in the like againe.”

And at the end of this confession, the first daie, the minister to rede the homely against adultrie or fornicacion and the third daie to rede the homely of repentance, the penitent standinge by all the while, and in like manner and form in every point and condicion as above is prescribed she shall doe two other Sundaies or holy daies next ensueing after the first. And if the penitent doing this uppon all the saied three severall Sundaies or holy daies she shall under the handes of the minister and churchwardens there personallie certifie together with those present the xxvii daie of February, at Greate St. Marie’s Church in Cambridge, and then and there receive such further order herein as shall be appointed.—BENNET THOROWGOOD.

“This penitent hath donne her pennance three severall Sundaies or holie daies in the parish Church of Fen Ditton according to the premis. *Ita est ut testatum* Thomas Godbed, Cur. *ibid* church, by me Edward Warden Brady.”

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XIV.—An Old-World Custom in vogue at Newton.

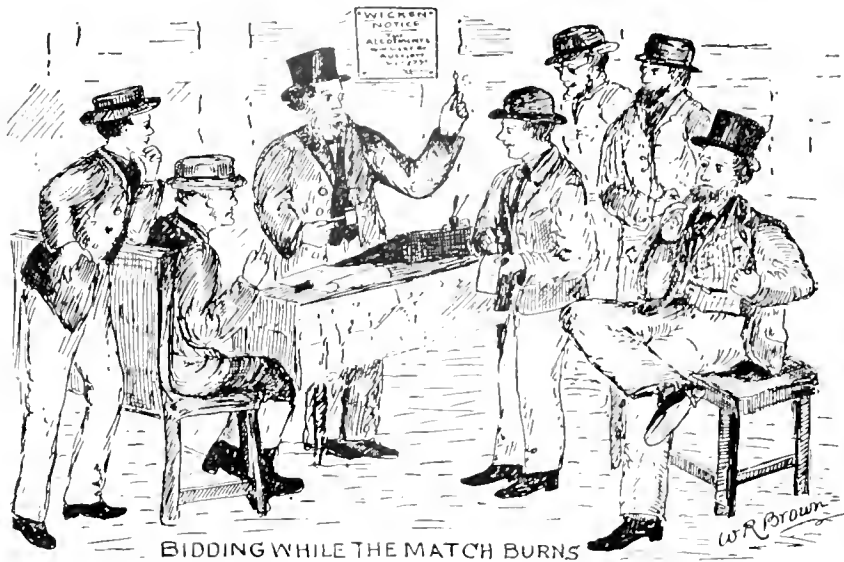


THE primitive method of agriculture here depicted—so remindful not only of Old English farming but also of Oriental custom, the husbandry of Bible lands, is still to be seen in this country. The writer has met with its observance at various places; in the rural districts round Hastings and Eastbourne it is no uncommon sight, and so in Norfolk and elsewhere. A notable instance of the use of oxen in ploughing may be seen on the Manor Farm at Newton, near Cambridge, and the oxen are a speciality, being a very successful cross between the Shorthorn and the Alderney; they are docile and tractable, steady-plodding and sturdy cattle, a yoke—that is, a pair—of which can do the work of an ordinary plough-horse. This custom was prevalent all over England at the time of the Domesday Survey. The standard plough-team was then four oxen and its name *caruca* (apparently from *quadra* and *uaccae*), indicates the fact. There were also *half-teams* of two oxen, and *double-teams* of eight, in regular use, according as the soil to be tilled was light and loamy, or stiff heavy clay-land. In the British Museum there are several Early English MSS. which are illustrated with carefully drawn and coloured views of the agricultural operations of their day, and among them several pictures of the ploughman at work with one or two pairs of oxen before him. Similar paintings are to be seen in the tombs of Egypt, showing that in the rural economy of that ancient people, the plough-ox held a most specific place. Among the Phœnicians and early Hebrews the Ox was important enough to give name and form to the first letter of the alphabet—*Aleph*, of which the Greek *Alpha* and the English A are the lineal descendants—the letter A inverted (▼) bearing no slight resemblance to the original hieroglyphic letter representing the head of an ox.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XV.—Rural Allotments and Land Estate Customs.



BIDDING WHILE THE MATCH BURNS

"A FAIR field and no favour," as the saying goes, is the aim of the peculiar custom here illustrated. This custom is observed at Wicken near Cambridge, on the occasion of letting out the Parish allotments to the villagers. Though somewhat of a novelty in this form, the custom of letting land to the highest bidder while the match—a wax vesta—is burning, is a mere variation of what is known as "Sale by Candle" or "French Auction," as it is sometimes called. Old writers sometimes mention it. Pepys records an instance in his Diary, it is worth quoting. Under date of Sept. 3, 1662, he says—"After dinner we met and sold the *Weymouth*, *Sucresse*, and *Fellowshippe* hulks; when pleasant to see how backward men were at first to bid, and yet when the candle is going out how they bawl, and dispute afterwards who bid the most. And here I observed one man cunninger than the rest, that was sure to be the last man, and to carry it, and enquiring the reason, he told me that just as the flame goes out the smoke descends, which is a thing I never observed before, and by that he do know the instant when to bid last." Some auctioneers use small "five minute" tapers, others use a glass like an "egg timer," and as a rule these expedients prevent strife and contention. It may be of interest to subjoin another example of this curious custom. At Tatworth in Somersetshire there is a plot of six acres of land which has been let in this way from time immemorial. The parishioners meet in the auction-room and the auctioneer lights an inch of candle and takes bids for the hire of the land, the last bidder before the light expires hires the land for a year at the price he offers. From Crickdale in Wiltshire a curious variation is reported as a custom dating from the reign of Edward IV. The auctioneer lights an inch-long piece of candle, and the bidding commences, but the bid which is made just as the candle goes out is the one which is accepted *even if the price mentioned be lower than the previous bids*. In this connection it may be well to note that King Alfred the Great has the credit of inventing *chronometric* candles—that is, candles so graduated as to mark time. Asser, the biographer and friend of King Alfred, tells us that his royal master had such candles specially made for him, each candle being *twelve* inches in length and weighing *twelve* pennyweights. Six of these candles would burn just twenty-four hours—*i.e.*, three inches per hour or twenty minutes per inch. To obviate waste by draught he invented lanthorns for the candles, having *horn* where the modern lantern has glass. This is an oft-told tale, and though it lacks historic corroboration, it need not be discredited on their account.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XVI.—Rural Allotments and Land Estate Custom.



AT Impington, the Parish authorities let certain local privileges by the curious method here depicted. Pins are stuck in a candle at intervals of about an inch, and the bidding for each plot goes on until the candle burns down and releases a pin, so that it falls to the table; the successful bidder is the person whose offer is made just before the pin drops. The Poor's Land at Kirtling, near Newmarket, is "let by the candle," but the tenancy is for a term of three years; and a similar custom is reported from Aldermaston near Reading. It is curious to find that John Milton in one of his letters stating that—"The Council think it meet to propose the way of selling by 'inch of candle' as being the most probable means to procure the true value of the goods."

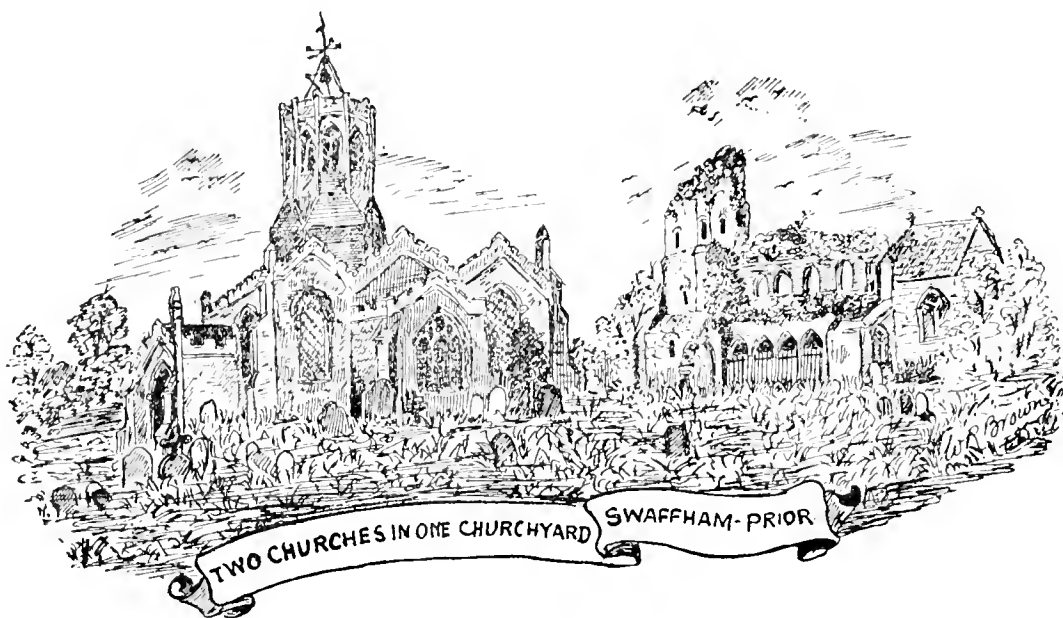
More peculiar, and most amusing is the expedient which regulates the letting of certain Charity Lands at Bourn in Lincolnshire. The auctioneer starts a number of boys to run a certain round, and while the boys are running he invites bids for the hire of the land: The highest bid is duly noted, and the lads are started off again and again, till they run a course during which no bids are made. The land is thus let for one year to the highest bidder. When the proceedings are over the tenants and all who care to accompany them, repair to a public-house, where they are treated to a luncheon of bread and cheese and beer, to which all comers are welcomed. After this a committee is formed to manage the affairs of the Charity until the next annual gathering: all this is in accord with the will of RICHARD CLAY, who in 1770 left his land to be thus let out, and devised that the rent should be devoted to the purchase of white bread for the poor and needy of that place.

There used to be a one-acre meadow in Cambridge, known as Doll's Close—that part of Maid's Causeway which faces the Common was built upon it, and so was Willow Walk. Its proper name, as it appears in the Charity Commissioners' Report was Dole's Close, which may be a reminder of the old English custom of apportioning allotments by *dals* or *doles*; a custom which gave name to the Dolemoors of Yorkshire, Somersetshire, and elsewhere. The custom referred to may be thus briefly described: The field was divided into portions, each of which changed hands annually; each portion had its special mark cut in the turf—a cross, an arrow, a horseshoe, a crescent, a circle, or some other sign; and a similar number of apples were marked in like manner, each answering to one of these *dals* or *doles*: these apples were placed in a tub of water and the tenants in turn dipped for one of them, the mark which it bore indicated the plot which was to be his for the ensuing year. The Somersetshire *dolemoors* were allotted in the same way, only their tenancy was for a somewhat longer term. This custom, which appears to be of Teutonic origin, is mentioned in the Domesday Survey.

URES CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XVII.—The Two Churches at Great Swaffham.

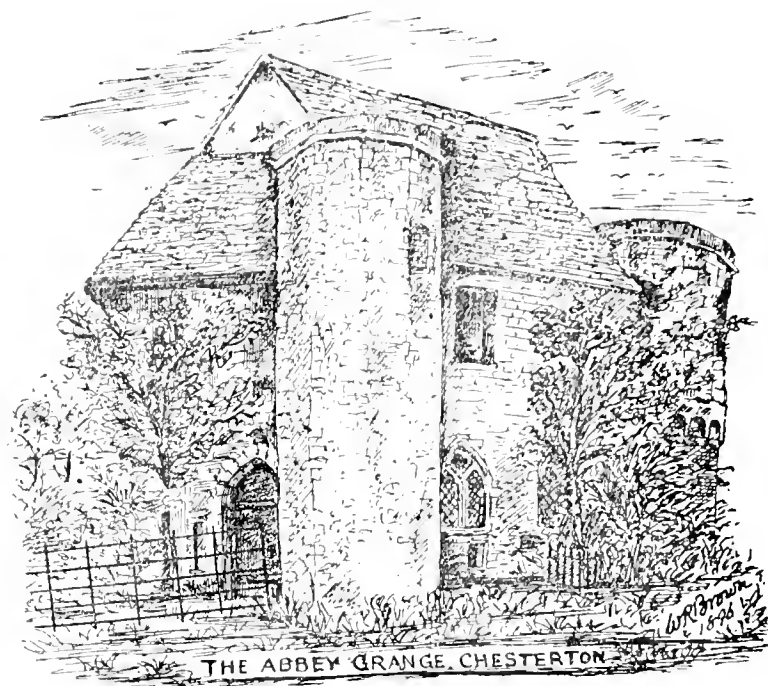


SWAFFHAM PRIOR has the distinction of being the only place in Cambridgeshire which has two churches standing side by side in the same churchyard. The church of St. Cyriac is a picturesque ruin, it now serves as a mausoleum for the Allix family. The tombs are in the roofless nave, they are so completely embowered by trees and leafy shrubs that one might fairly say that the body of the church resembles a miniature arboretum, and viewed from the chancel end it looks like a woodland glade. The broken arcade of the clerestory with its garniture of foliage, and the ivy mantled tower with its dilapidated masonry completes the charming settings of a scene not to be matched in this or any other county of England or Wales. The other church is dedicated to St. Mary; it is built in what is known as the "Gothic" style of the Georgian era. The tower, however, is much more ancient, it dates from the Tudor period, and yet it looks strong enough to outlast the modern nave and aisles that have been ramped on to it. It is square below, and octagonal above, with a belfry window in each side of the octagon; there is a peal of six bells. As the churchyard is somewhat higher than its fenland surroundings, these two churches are conspicuous features of the landscape, they are a sort of way-mark that may be seen for many miles. The folk-lore of the place has localised the well-known legend of two maiden sisters, who to spite one another, each built a church and each instituted her own clergyman who humoured their individual whims, and ministered to their conceits; but the credentials of the legend are no more trustworthy at Swaffham, than in various other places where the same tale is told.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XVIII.—The Old Abbey Grange at Chesterton.



THE quaint old-fashioned house here sketched was, in the days of its prime, a mediæval stronghold; and now that the Roman Camp and the Norman Castle are gone, it is the only kind of fortress which Chesterton has to shew in justification of its name "*the town of the Castle*" or "*Camp*." The Abbey Grange was built in the 13th century, and is regarded as a good specimen of the middle-class domestic architecture of that time. The Abbey of Vercellæ, in northern Italy, owned a considerable property in this neighbourhood, and the bailiff or steward of that estate resided here. The house consists of two apartments—a room on the ground floor, and a chamber above it; they are oblong in form, measuring about twenty-seven feet by seventeen. The lower room has a vaulted ceiling of stone with curious carvings at the intersections of the groining. The walls are about a yard in thickness, and the apartment is lighted by four two-light windows in the ecclesiastical style of the period; there are also three narrow slits in the wall which are splayed like the Leper squints one sees in the old pre-Reformation churches. An alcove or mural niche at the east end shews where the old fireplace was with its capacious hearth-stone for the logs and brushwood fuel, it was the cosiest corner of the room. The only door—that shewn in our sketch—is a massive slab of oak braced on either side with large clasp hinges, and the holes in the masonry on either side of the doorway indicate that the door was barred with a stout wooden beam. At the north corner stands the tower which contained the winding stairway which gave access to the upper room, and also to the *burgh-kenning* or watch-turret at the top of tower; this is the tower to the right of the doorway, to which we give prominence in our sketch. The tower at the western corner is said to have contained a well; a square tower at the south corner was for sanitary purposes. This interesting relic of olden time stands in the paddock which adjoins the Vicarage, and the lower part is now utilised as a parish-room for Church purposes.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Camcos.

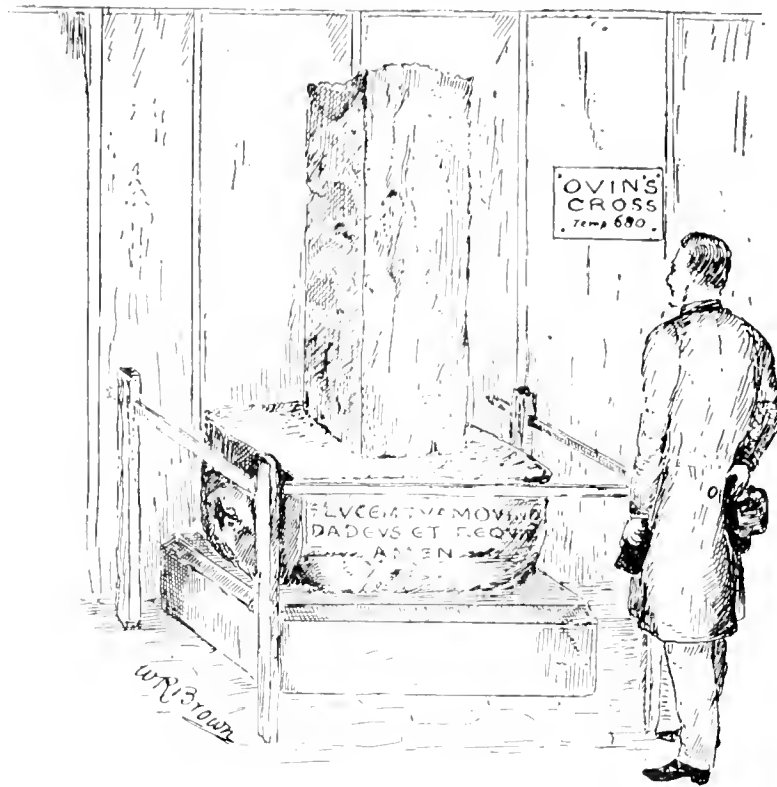
XIX.—The Churchyard Bounty at Little Gransden.



In pre-Reformation times there were Chantry-chapels in the aisles of many of our Parish Churches, little side-rooms where prayers were regularly offered for the dead, and masses were read or chanted "to order" for the repose of the soul. Such apartments there used to be in Great St. Mary's Church at Cambridge, in Little St. Mary's and others, in some of the College Chapels, notably in King's, and even in the University Library; but the best examples are to be found in some of the village Churches. In the times when the Papacy predominated, even the Trade-guilds contracted for the post-mortem benefit of their members, and outsiders were allowed to be booked and paid for by their friends. The same line was adopted by certain of the laity who were known as Bedes-folk. They were semi-official prayer-makers—men and women—who for such considerations as an almshouse, with or without uniform, and a small stipend, undertook to pray every day for the founder of the charity, and others who might be named in their charter of incorporation. There was also another class of praying mercenaries who were called together less often, generally once a year at an obituary service, when a money-dole was given on the tomb, or at the grave-side; and on the principle that "*one good turn deserves another*," the recipients were expected to offer prayer for the soul of the person who gave the bequest. A money-dole which recalls these ancient customs is the Musgrave Dole at Little Gransden. This is a rent-charge on certain property left by the Rev. James Musgrave, who was the Rector of this place from 1714 to 1747. The record of this charity in the Parliamentary Report is worth quoting; it runs thus:—"JAMES MUSGRAVE by a codicil to his Will bearing date 4th June, 1744, gave a freehold cottage, barn, yard, and orchard, lying near the Clay Pitts on the Layes, in the parish of Gransden Parva, with the commons and advantages thereunto belonging . . . for the benefit of poor widows and widowers, and other poor persons, on the following conditions: that the trustees should let the cottage and premises, and after the expenses of all requisite repairs be deducted from the rent, the surplus should be annually disposed of in the following manner, viz.—To every poor widower and poor widow of the said parish the sum of 1s., upon condition that they should personally ATTEND AT THE FAMILY VAULT of the Musgrave family on the thirty-first of May, at 6 o'clock in the morning; that the bellringer should have 1s. on that morning for tolling the bell during one hour, namely, from 6 to 7 a.m.; and if any surplus remained, he then directed that a shilling should be given to every poor family at the aforesaid vault until the whole should be exhausted." This dole is still given on the 31st of May, not at the tomb, as of old, and according to the Will, but at the Vestry door, as illustrated above. The Vestry is the ground floor of the Church-tower. The Rector reads the names of the alms-people from a list, and his warden hands out the shillings to the beneficiaries who are present. On the occasion witnessed by the writer about 30 of the villagers were present, some of whom took the money for the absentees. It is a gratifying feature of the present-day dispensation of this charity that "the shilling" is sent to any who from illness or infirmity may be unable to attend. The ceremony is now a short one, not lasting above ten minutes, a scant reminder of the hour of bell-tolling stipulated and paid for. As it represents "the passing-bell" of old-time superstition, so "the shilling" represents the Charon's toll of Classic Paganism, as revived in the *soul-scoot* of Old English folk-lore.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XX.--Ovin's Cross, & other Antiquities of Haddenham.



OVIN's Cross, which is here represented, has been removed from its original site at Haddenham, and is now enshrined in Ely Cathedral. In the year 1770, Mr. James Benthall, the eminent antiquary, discovered this relic of Saxon times in use as wayside horse-mount, near Haddenham Church, and he obtained a license to remove it to Ely. It stands near the west-end of southern-nave aisle of the Cathedral. The base is square, each side measuring about 2 feet 3 inches. Its depth is 15 inches. There is only about 3 feet of the shaft left. The inscription is in Latin, and reads thus :—† LUCEM TUAM OVINO DA DEUS ET REQUIEM. AMEN. That is, "O God, grant Thy light and rest to Ovin. Amen." The Ovin (or Wini) here commemorated was *hus-thegu*, or steward, to Etheldreda, the foundress of the Cathedral. Ovin accompanied his mistress from her home in East Anglia, when she married Tonbert, Prince of the South Gyrvians, who bestowed the Isle of Ely upon her as her dower. Ovin died in 680, and this stone may have been his monument. Murray notes that "Winford, a manor near Haddenham, may not impossibly retain the name of Wini"—as Bede writes the name of Etheldreda's steward, and that "the cross may perhaps have been set up by Wini himself, on land granted him by Etheldreda, or by Tonbert; at any rate, the almost pure Roman lettering may very well be of his time."

Aldreth, anciently Ædreth, is a local reminder of Ovin's patroness Etheldreda; it is a hamlet of Haddenham. This place is of historical note; here it was that William the Conqueror effected an entrance into the Isle of Ely, where for many years the Saxons held out against the Norman invaders. Belsar's Hill is an extensive rampart or entrenchment in this place; it is named after *Belisar* or *Belasius*, a general of the King's army. Camden's note of this military encampment will be appropriate here. He says that the Normans "erected forts at Eryth, and Athered or Audrey (Aldreth), where is an easy open passage into the Isle of Ely, and to this day there is a rampart nigh Audrey, not high, but very large, called Belsar's Hills." It was presumably an ancient British earth-work, utilised by the Normans, who may have made some additions thereto. It must always have been of strategical importance, commanding as it did the only pass into the Isle of Ely. Macfarlane's *Camp of Refuge* and Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake* are the books to refer to for the fascinating story of this last stand of the English in their defence of the Isle of Ely.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XXI.—Fulbourn Church Attendance Charity.—I.



AT Fulbourn, near Cambridge, a well-to-do Churchman, William Farmer by name, started an ingenious plan for increasing the attendance at the Sunday services of the Church. He bequeathed certain estates in trust for this purpose. We will quote from the Charity Commissioners' Report, which runs thus:—"William Farmer, of Fulbourn, by will dated 3rd of March, 1712, devised certain lands in Fulbourn, Westley, and Brinkley, after the death of his wife, to certain trustees, to sell, and he directed one moiety of the clear surplus after certain legacies therein given should be laid out in the purchase of lands in fee for a perpetual charity, the rents and profits thereof to be disposed of and distributed in the Parish Church of Fulbourn All Saints every Lord's Day to such poor inhabitants of the said parish as should constantly attend Divine service and the worship of God, according to the present Establishment, by the Vicar of the said Church and Churchwardens, according to their discretions, they having regard to the most constant attendants upon the service of the said Church, and such as behave themselves there with the most gravity and seriousness; it being his chief design to encourage piety and goodness, and a steady and firm adherence to the liturgy of the Church of England, and to promote the glory of God and the interests of Christ's Church. Accordingly after the Morning and Evening Services this Charity or Largess was dispensed. THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER were distributed every Sunday by a peculiar form of lottery, conventionally known as 'the lucky bag.' The description of this method, which is given in the Official Report, is as follows:—"The distribution is restricted to married persons with families, widows and widowers, of whom a list is made and their names written on tickets and put in a bag from which they are drawn as lots, and if the person whose name is drawn answers when called he (or she) receives 6d." The tickets drawn out of one bag are put into another, from which they are drawn in the same way when the first bag is empty, thus all who were present had an equal chance. The Commissioners suggested that if tickets were given instead of money and paid once or twice a year, the Charity would be less liable to abuse. The "Ticket-a-time" system is now in vogue—this will form the subject of another pen-picture of this eccentric charity.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Camcos.

XXII.—Fulbourne Church Attendance Charity.—II.



THE custom here represented—that of giving *cashable tickets* to grown-up people for attendance at Church—is a custom which is peculiar to Fulbourne. The Almoner stands in the Church porch, and as the eligible parishioners pass out they are handed a ticket bearing an imprint like this:—

Farmer's
Charity.
1891

Upon each of these tickets "One Penny" is realisable, once a quarter; the pay-day is duly announced by a *periodical* notice tacked on the Church door. These paid congregants reverse, as it were, the conventional rule of the offertory—*getting* instead of *giving* a penny each time of their attendance. Some of the aged beneficiaries have assured the writer that they get more in the long run by the penny ticket system than they did by the chance sixpence; the morality, however, of such a custom is a lacquer of the thinnest film imaginable. A mural tablet in the Church thus publicly notifies this curious charity:—

M. S.
Near this place lyeth the Body
of WILLIAM FARMER,
Gent., descended from y^e ancient
Family of the FARMERS of
Norton, in Leicester. He was
twice married, but having no issue,
He left his estate to his poor
Relatives and such poor
Inhabitants of this Parish as should
most duly attend upon the worship
of God in the Church.
Dyed May 3rd.
A^o Dom 1712.
Aged 75 years.

The *raison d'être* of this custom may be spelt out from the following details:—Compulsory attendance at the Parish Church was "the order of the day" in King Edward the VI.'s time, and this was enforced by the law of the land. Good Queen Bess vindicated her attachment to the State Church by similar enactments. James I., in his turn, re-enforced this statute, but William and Mary made exceptions in favour of Dissenters. It became necessary then, and afterwards, to offer inducements for attendance, hence we find numerous Charities instituted to promote regularity of attendance at Church. Scores of such incentives are known to fame and their records are "legion."

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XXIII.—Comberton Maze.



In the playground of the National School at Comberton, on what was once the Village Green, are the almost worn-out traces of a large circular maze, or turf-cut labyrinth. Its grassy balks have all disappeared, and so scant are the vestiges of the intervening paths, that it is now very difficult to map out their serpentine course. Our illustration may serve, however, to show the probable plan of what the Maze was like in the days of its prime. It was of the type popularly designated "Troy Town" and "Mizmaze." The first of these names is due to the fact, that like the world-famous city of Troy, the maze had but one entrance. In Dorsetshire there is a rural hamlet called "Troy Town," from one of these curious geometrical devices. In the adjoining county of Wiltshire there is a place called "Mizmaze Hill," from a maze cut in the greensward; and near Winchester College is another "Mizmaze," which is trimmed and kept in order by the collegians. There is a pathetic story told of the origin of this labyrinth: It is said that a boy for some misdemeanour was kept at school during the holidays, and he set to work and cut this maze to while away the time, and when he had completed the task he pined away and died. But, as Murray says,—*"Matter-of-fact archaeologists assert that this labyrinth had an ecclesiastical origin. Such intricate compositions were formerly very frequent, and were used as instruments of penance for the non-fulfilment of vows of pilgrimage, hence they are known as *Chemins de Jerusalem*" (that is—Ways to Jerusalem.) It is known for certain, that mazes were thus made subservient to the purposes of priestcraft. There is one in the floor of Sens Cathedral, inlaid like a mosaic, and those who made use of such*

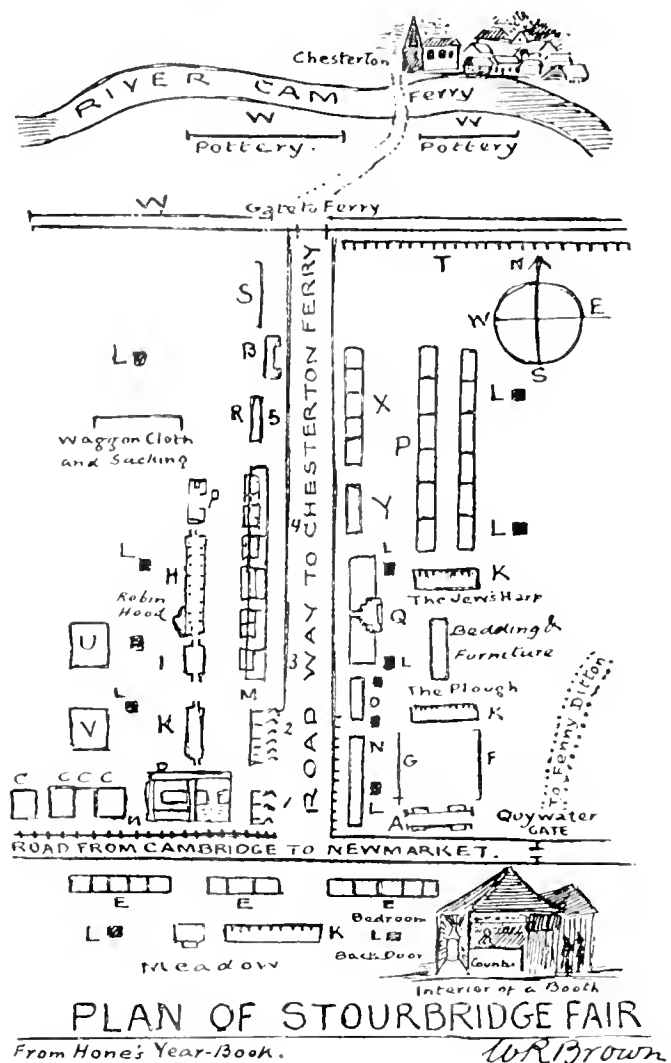
A PENITENTIAL ROUNDABOUT

had to do so on their knees. In the Cathedral of Bayeux there is another of the same circular type, others were octagonal, the form varies, but the principle is the same.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XXIV.—Old Stourbridge Fair.



KEY TO PLAN.

1. Furniture Dealers', Ironmongers', Silversmiths', Hardware and Cutlery Stalls.
2. Drapery, Silk Mercery, etc.
3. Lace, Hose, Boots, etc.
4. Dealers in Furs, Fans, Toys, etc.
5. Paints, Pickles, and Italian Stores.

A—The Chapel.

- B—Pied-Poudre Court.
 CCCC—Wild Beast Shows, Conjurors, etc.
 D—Theatre.
 E—Cheese Fair.
 F—Wool Fair.
 G—Hop Fair.
 H—Basket Fair.
 I—Dining Booths.
 KKK—
 L—Latrine.

- M—Garlie Row.
 N—Glovers' Row.
 P—Ironmongers' Row. [Tavern.
 Q—Dockrell's Coffee House and
 R—Dealers in Furniture, etc.
 S—Oyster Fair.
 T—Horse Fair.
 WWW—Pot Fair.
 X—Booths for Slop Sellers, and
 Rustic Requirements.
 Y—Hatters' Row.

THE above sketch will give an idea of what Stourbridge Fair was about a century ago. In the days of its prime it was by far the largest and most important fair in Great Britain. Lysons says that "it seems probable that it was to this mart at Cambridge that the Irish merchants brought cloth and other goods in the reign of King Athelstan, as may be collected from a passage in the Ancient History of Ely. The profits of the fair were granted by King John to the brethren of the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen at Sterebridge; the desecrated chapel of which [marked A in plan] has long been used as a victualling house during the fair. King Henry VIII. in the year 1539... granted the rights and profits of this fair to the Corporation of Cambridge." This fair occupied an area of about half a mile square, and lasted about three weeks; the "Fair" of to-day is the flimsiest apparition of what it was in days of yore.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Camcos.

XXV.—MARRIAGE PORTIONS BY LOTTERY.



THE disposal of a Dowry or Marriage Portion by *ballot*, is the curious custom which is associated with Perram's Charity at Newmarket; in proof of this the Parliamentary Report may be quoted:—"PERRAM'S GIFT. By a deed poll, dated 12th August, 1801, executed in pursuance of a decree in Chancery in execution of the will of John Perram, dated 30th May, 1772, and proved in the Prerogative Court, the trustees of a sum of £410 6s. and 2d. Three per Cent. Consols, and £21 Bank Long Annuities, being the original sum given by the will, together with some accumulations which had accrued during the proceedings in Chancery, were declared to hold them upon trust, *six weeks at least before Easter, to cause notice to be given as therein directed, that*

A MARRIAGE PORTION OF TWENTY-ONE POUNDS

would be given to a parishioner of the said parish, who on THURSDAY IN EASTER WEEK should be married at the Church to a woman belonging to it, neither party to be under 20 nor exceed 25 years of age, nor be worth £20; the Trustees to attend in the vestry to receive claims; in the case of two claims

THE DETERMINATION TO BE BY BALLOT

which should receive it; in the case of no claimants, then the money for that year only to be handed the Trustees to the winner of the next Town Plate.....Notice is annually given in sufficient time to allow the publication of the banns before Easter week." The Report goes on to say that "The money has not been claimed more than 20 times in the last 30 years; when claimed, the whole dividend is paid to the persons entitled, when unclaimed it is carried to the racing fund." What the observance of this custom is like, may be imagined from our illustration, which really represents a similar benefaction, one which has a prominent place among the London Charities.* Another equally curious allotment of a Marriage Portion takes place annually in the Town-hall at Guildford, in Surrey, where the competitors *raffle* for the bounty. In this connection it will be of interest to note that the Marquis of Bute has just commemorated his own SILVER WEDDING by the institution of a similar custom at Cardiff. He has sent a cheque for £1,000 to the Corporation of that town—to invest at 5 per cent.—the interest to be applied annually as a Wedding Portion to some worthy couple whose impediment to MATRIMONY IS A "MATTER O' MONEY."

URBS CAMBORITUM.

* See our "Pen-pictures of Popular Place-Lore."

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XXVI.—Fen and River Islands.



TOLL-HOUSE ISLAND — CHESTERTON SLUICE.

In the Fens of North Cambridgeshire there are several slightly elevated spots, which, for the greater part of the year, used to be surrounded by water, and hence they were conventionally called "ISLANDS." The environment of these once insulated spots is now so completely altered by drainage, that, except in name, they have little or nothing to shew for their fen-island fame. Among these "names" are Ely, "the island of willow-trees"; Whittlesey the island-home of a clan of Anglo-Saxons, known as the Witlingas; Horningsea the island-home of the Horning-clan; Ramsey, Quaney, Quy, Manea, Stonea, are a sample of place-names which bear witness to locations on once insulated portions of the fenland district. The *y*, *ey*, and *ea* represent the old Teutonic word for "island." As to river-islands there is "the Holme," which in olden time was the station of the Hermit who took toll between the two fords now covered by the bridge connecting Great and Little Shelford; and nearer Cambridge in the same river is Robinson Crusoe's island. From an old map of 1574, and from history, we learn that there was once an island at the back of Trinity College called "Garret Hostel Green," which has long since been annexed to the College grounds; but within living memory, to our certain knowledge, there was another such an island in the Cam between Midsummer Common and the present Ferry Path. Our illustration is a reminiscent sketch of this place as it was in 1830, shortly after which date it was annexed to the Common. This island was turned to account by the Conservators of the Cam as the location of a toll-house for the exaction of river-dues; it was the site of Chesterton Sluice. The toll-house faced the common, and "the pen" through which the navigation had to pass was in front of it; a pole-bridge was pivotted on the bank of the island to be turned over the stream when occasion required to give access to the island on the Cambridge side. And this was pretty often, as a very popular inn was located on the same island—"the Fort St. George in England." This inn is still in evidence, though not insulated as it once was. The sluice-gates and waterfall blocked the back-water behind the toll-house, but a foot-bridge connected the island with the Chesterton bank. The Toll-house and its accessories are removed higher up the stream, and a Ferry crosses the river where the old bridge stood—the channel on the Cambridge side is filled up and added with the island to the area of the Common.

URES CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XXVII.—Barnwell Abbey.



THE OLD REFECTORY

BARNWELL ABBEY—the last existing remnant of which is here sketched, is an edifice which dates from the reign of King Henry I. It was founded by a Crusader, PAYEN PEVEREL, for the better accommodation of the regular canons of St. Giles, who were pent up in a small church-house near Cambridge Castle. This removal to better and more commodious quarters, may have reminded some of these Norman monks of their *alma mater* at *Burnville* near Bee—a religious house of great note in its day, and it is not unlikely that the name of their new residence would be a reminiscence of this fact. Such a name could be easily Anglicized as Barnwell, and interpreted in popular parlance as a reference to the chivalrous patron of the Abbey, as if from *beorn* “a warrior,” and *wella* “a spring.” Prior, however, to the erection of the Abbey, this locality was already a *Burnville* in miniature. It was known to fame as the sanctuary of Godeson,* an Anglo-Saxon hermit, whose services were available for those who travelled by the river, then a busy thoroughfare to and from the Fens. The hermitage was probably near the perennial spring which issued from a tiny grotto at the head of a small watercourse or *burn*; this spring and streamlet were both in evidence until the estate was devoted to building purposes. The only portion that is now left as a sample of the once magnificent premises of the Abbey is the Old Refectory, and this is much dilapidated. This building, and a piece of land which surrounds it were presented to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society by Mr. JOSEPH STURTON, who purchased the estate in 1866.

URBS CAMBORITUM.

* The name “Godesdone” Road is intended to commemorate the Barnwell hermit.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XXVIII.—Cambridge Gaols. I.



PREVIOUS to the erection of Queen Anne Terrace facing the South side of Parker's Piece, the site was occupied by a gaol, the last of those which were exclusively for the Borough of Cambridge. History mentions three such gaols. The first of these was the old Tolbooth near the Market Place; and its record opens with a curious statement which might be mistaken for fiction, were it not duly authenticated by the historian. Fuller, in his "History of Cambridge," under date of A.D. 1221 (8 Hen. III.) says: "The King by his letters to the Sheriff of Cambridgeshire gave order that he should put the bailiffs of Cambridge into the possession of the house of Benjamin the Jew (probably forfeited to the Crown on his misdemeanour) to make thereof a common gaol for their Corporation." This house is traditionally identified with the old Tolbooth near the Market Place, of which Carter thus writes in 1753: "The Town Gaol adjoining the Town Hall is a most shocking place to be confined in, especially for food, lodging, and air, all of which are very indifferent." The gaoler was allowed to sell ale to the prisoners, and his appreciation of this perquisite is evidenced by the following note from the *Annals* (iv. 140): "On the 30th of April, 1789, John Doggett, the gaoler, presented a petition to the Justices in which he stated that the profits from the gaoler's former privilege of selling ale were considered a reasonable allowance for keeping the Gaol." A new Gaol having been built in 1788 on a part of the Hobson estate, at the back of the Spinning House, the old Tolbooth was demolished in 1790, in accordance with the following advertisement which is from the *Cambridge Chronicle*, January 30, of that year:—

CAMBRIDGE TOWN GAOL.

TO be SOLD by AUCTION,
at the White Bear inn, in Cambridge, on Saturday, the 6th
day of February next, between the hours of three and five in the
afternoon, subject to such conditions as will be there and then
produced;

All that MESSUAGE or TENEMENT and BUILDING,
situate near the Shire-hall in the said Town, late in the occupa-
tion of John Doggett and used as the Town Gaol.

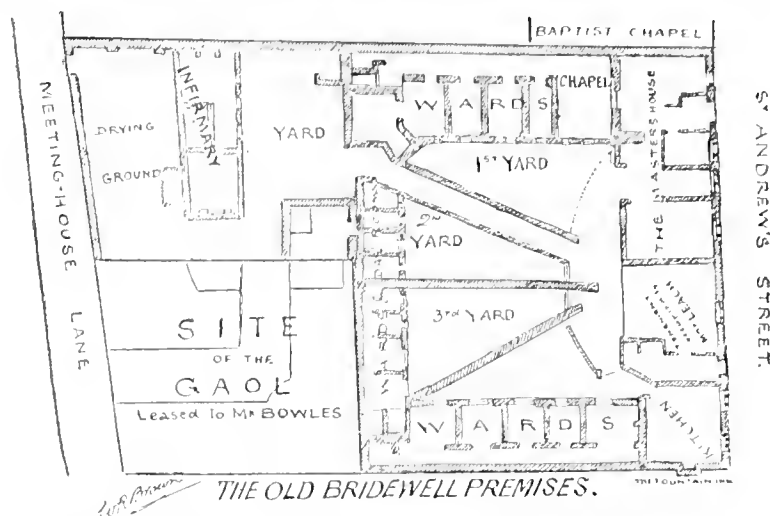
Which said premises will be either conveyed in fee, or demised
for 999 years under the annual rent of a pepper corn, at the
option of the purchaser.

By order,
ROBERT WHITE, Town Clerk.

CAMBRIDGE, 28th Jan., 1790.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XXIX.—Cambridge Gaols. II.



THE antiquated prison-house known as the Tolbooth disappeared in 1790, but a few remains of its substantial masonry may yet be seen on the premises in old Butter Row, lately known as the "Town Arms." The new Gaol on the Hobson estate was in the lane now called Downing Place, but then known as Meeting House Lane. It overlooked the old Swincroft, where Hobson used to pasture his swine—the seven leys of meadow-land which he bequeathed to the Town for "the maintenance of the Conduit for ever." The Gaol was thus at the back of the Bridewell or Spinning-house, which as Carter says "was pleasantly situated near the fields at the south-end of the parish of St. Andrew." An old guide book of the time (1804) says—"The Town jail is a commodious new building of brick with the Bridewell contiguous to it, surrounded by a lofty wall." The site of this Gaol was occupied rent free until 1830, when the gaol was pulled down, and the site resumed by the trustees of the estate, a new gaol having been erected on a strip of land skirting Parker's Piece on the south. This being common land, an Act of Parliament had to be obtained for its enclosure and appropriation; the Royal Assent to this Act was given on June 23, 1827, and the Gaol was finished in 1829. The building was of brick, octangular in shape, with three double wings, providing accommodation for fifty prisoners. The front was in the castellated style and (as depicted in CAMEO XXVIII.), it had a somewhat imposing appearance, with its entrance surmounted by an imitation portcullis, and flanked with two massive parapetted towers. In April, 1878, the local authorities received a letter from the Home Secretary notifying that the Borough Gaol was to be discontinued as a prison, and that the County Gaol was to be used instead thereof. Thither the prisoners were removed, and the Gaol was closed on the 15th of May, 1878. The Town Council having resolved to sell the building materials of the disused Gaol and utilise the site; the remains of the only criminal who was hung at that Gaol were exhumed and reburied in the Castle precincts early in January, 1879, and the building materials of the Gaol were sold to Mr. J. F. Fetch. How they were disposed of may be judged from the following advertisement, one of many, that appeared in successive issues of the *Chronicle* :—

CAMBRIDGE BOROUGH GAOL.

TO CONTRACTORS, BUILDERS AND OTHERS.

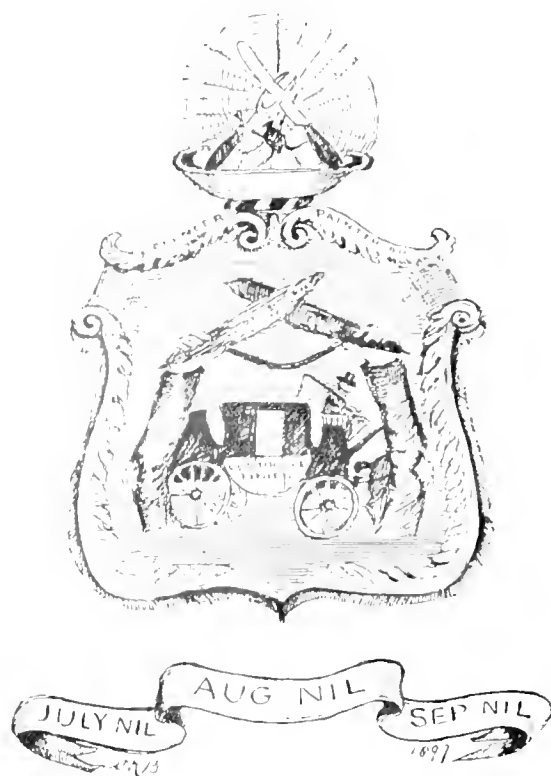
JAMES FIELD FETCH

HAVING purchased the Materials of the Borough Gaol which consist of an extensive quantity of sound Building Bricks, Yorkshire Stone, Iron Piping, a quantity of Lead, Doors, Window Stores, and Circular Iron Staircase, Kitchen Ranges, Flag Pavement, Timbers, Floors, Joists, Cast and Wrought Iron, large Iron Tank, and various other valuable Materials, will be Sold by Auction, on Wednesday, February 5, 1879, punctually on the premises at 12 o'clock at noon.

THIS CAMBORITUM.

Cambridgeshire Cameos.

XXX.—Local Sayings—wise, and otherwise.



AN EMBLEM OF CAMBRIDGE IN "THE LONG."

"**A**S DULL AS CAMBRIDGE IN 'THE LONG'" is a curiously worded proverb, which was much in vogue in days gone by. The Emblem here sketched from an old panel-painting is quaintly expressive of the *dolce far niente* or "delicious idleness" of a considerable portion of Cambridge folk in "the Long." By "the Long" is meant "the Long Vacation"—that aching void of three dawdling months which intervene between the June festivities and the October term—the three months here characterised from a wage-earning point of view as July *nil*, August *nil*, and September *nil*. In the centre of the shield there is a couple of cucumbers indicative of the season, upheld by two arms with coat-sleeves out at the elbows, and beyond the archway thus formed sits a drowsy coachman on the driving box of "*The Cambridge Times*"—the very image of enforced idleness. The picture is completed by an empty dinner plate with a knife and fork on end, neatly en-haloed with a cobweb in token of long disuse—an obvious counterpart of the inscription beneath the emblem—JULY *nil*, AUGUST *nil*, SEPTEMBER *nil*,—a popular version which is "read and known of all."

"**H**OBSON'S CHOICE" is a conventional phrase signifying—"this, or none." The story of its origin is a curious one, and worth re-telling. Thomas Hobson was a noted carrier at Cambridge in the days of James I. He started what are known as livery stables by letting out horses for riding, for which purpose he kept forty, and it was an invariable rule with him that no horse should be hired except in its proper turn; if the customer objected to the horse offered, his attention was drawn to the rule "this, or none." This in time became proverbial as "Hobson's Choice—this or none."

"**A**NINE DAYS' WONDER." This is a saying which has many localisations, but none more remarkable than the case of Elizabeth Woodcock of Impington near Cambridge, who, as is well known, was overwhelmed in a snow-drift on February 2nd, 1799, and was not released until the SIXTH day afterwards. The story has been often related. It was on a Saturday afternoon, as she was returning home from market that she happened of this remarkable adventure. A snow-storm came on, and her horse took fright, she dismounted and led it until she was too tired to walk any further. Under the shelter of a hedge she was screened from the driving snow which soon formed a sort of cavern around her. Here she was entombed until the following Sunday week, when she was discovered by a villager and rescued. After this adventure she was interviewed by hundreds of visitors from far and near.

URBS CAMLORITUM.

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